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THE MISSIONARY CHARACTER

AND

DUTY OF THE CHURCH:

A Sermon,

BEFORE THE

DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY

OF THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

IN THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

AT ITS

TRIENNIAL MEETING IN ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH,

PHILADELPHIA, AUGUST 24, 1835.

BY THE

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AND

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“YE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.”—*Matthew, v. 14.*

To what particular class of persons our Lord addressed these words, whether to all his people, or only to those on whom he laid the special duties of the ministry of the word, does not admit of a question. They are part of a discourse which the Evangelist introduces by these words: “Seeing the multitude, he went up into a mountain, and when he was set, his disciples came unto him and he opened his mouth and taught them.” Now, inasmuch as there had been as yet no selection, either of the twelve or the seventy for their peculiar office, the disciples here mentioned must have been those in general who followed the ministry, believed in the claims, and embraced the doctrines of Christ. So that, in the application of the words of the text, we have reason to regard them as now addressed to all that profess to be followers of Christ, in other words, to the church of Christ on earth, the associated fellowship of all that have been dedicated to him in the sacrament of baptism.

To the church, then, belongs, in regard to the moral world, the same office for which the sun was ordained in the natural. Both were set up for the

express purpose of giving light—and of giving light to all that are in the world, that their *going forth might be from the end of the heaven, and their circuit unto the ends of it, till there should be nothing hid from the light thereof.*

Between the sun of the natural world, however, and the church on earth, as the established means by which it is the good pleasure of God to shed the light of spiritual life over all the earth, there is this most essential difference. The light of the former originates in itself; but all the light of the latter is derived. It hath nothing holy, nothing beautiful, nothing radiant that it hath not received. It is the mere reflector by which it is the will of Him who said, “I am the light of the world,” to transmit his effulgence. Turned away from Christ, it is covered with darkness. Turned unto Christ, and occupying precisely the place, and directed to precisely the objects for which he hath ordained it, it becomes identified with himself; so that the language which would seem to be only appropriate to the sun, he applies to the satellite, and the church, like her Lord, is called “the light of the world.” Still, however, it becometh her most humbly and continually to feel, and glory in, her absolute dependance; and, like the forerunner of her Lord, to be ever acknowledging that she is not the light, but the mere “witness of the light,” that all men through her ministry might believe.

Thus witnessed the golden candlestick in the tabernacle—Standing in the holy place, where no light could come but such as should issue from its seven lamps; it represented the position of the church in a benighted world, where every ray of spiritual

illumination must proceed from her agency. But however beautiful the workmanship, and precious the material of which the candlestick was made ; and however excellent the substance with which the lamps were daily replenished—the light was not in them, nor could it abide upon them, till Aaron, the type of our Great High Priest, had touched them with the holy fire of the altar of burnt-offerings ; nor did they continue to shine but as the same typical priesthood continually renewed their flame. So stands the church towards the Lord—her light. Her raiment may be of wrought gold ; the lamp in her hands may be no other than the primitive ministry of apostolic institution, filled with the pure oil olive of the Holy Scriptures ; but to *arise and shine*, as she is commanded, the glory of the Lord must be risen upon her—the lips of her ministry, like those of the Prophet, must be touched with a live coal from the altar of the great sacrifice for sin ; the word at their mouths must be attended by the demonstration of the Spirit ; and through their daily watching, and praying, and teaching, the whole membership of the church must be so continually turned toward the will of God, and the grace provided in Jesus Christ, as that, like the face of Moses on the mount, they may shine alway in the beauty of holiness.

Thus, when St. John was in the vision in the isle of Patmos, he beheld, in symbol, the position and duty, as well as the power and glory of the church. He saw the seven golden candlesticks, as standing for the whole church in the variety of her offices and circumstances, but as appointed for the express purpose of always giving light. He saw, moreover, whence came her light. He beheld “in the midst of

the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man—and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.” In his right hand were “seven stars”—“the Angels of the churches,” as the seven planets are held in their places by the power of the sun. While thus the responsibility and entire dependance of the ministers of Christ, and more especially of the chief pastors and rulers of His church are exhibited, how precious to those who feel their insufficiency for such things as are committed to their charge is the assurance that, while he will be with his whole church to the end of the world, he will hold *them* in his right hand, as the special representatives of Himself, sustaining them, defending them, and filling them with the light of his countenance.

And now, in the general view we have extracted from the Scriptures of the design of the Lord of glory in setting up His church, let us note with special emphasis, the very solemn and unspeakably responsible relation in which she stands towards the whole world.

Behold the condition of this world. Survey its most favoured regions, where the gospel has long been preached, and the leaven of its holy institutions has long been operating; take the most christian of protestant christian lands, and under the general name of a christian people, what an immense proportion of the population are as unreached by the direct and spiritual influence of gospel truth, as if it had never been revealed. Pass on from one region of christendom to another—from protestant to papal, then from papal to pagan. Number the tens of millions of the followers of the Mohammedan imposture; then the hundreds of millions of the blind and de-

graded devotees of a most licentious and cruel idolatry. What an immense proportion of men are in slavish bondage to the spirit that ruleth in the children of disobedience—children of darkness, suffering incalculable evils in this life, and ripening for a miserable eternity ! Twenty millions of such immortal souls, every year, finish their course, and pass to the bar of God—ignorant of any God or Saviour but that which their own hands have fashioned, of any holiness but such as ripens them to be lost for ever.

The pen of inspiration has drawn up the history of their condition, and the catalogue of their vices. What was heathenism in the days of St. Paul is essentially the heathenism of our days. “Because,” (saith he,) “that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves wise they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man; and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things—who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator—for this cause God gave them up unto vile affections—being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity—covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”

Such is paganism in the present day ! Such is the

paganism that covers with its darkness, and binds in fetters of iron, nearly two-thirds of the family of man !

But is there no remedy ? I need not spend a moment before this missionary assemblage in showing that, in all the devices of man's wisdom, and all the efforts which mere human power could institute, this dreadful wo can find but the mockery of relief. Nor is it necessary to show that the light which shines in the face of Jesus Christ, and is revealed in his word, and committed to his church, is just the remedy, and the only possible remedy for all the miseries, temporal and eternal, which the sin of departing from the living God has brought upon the world. But to this one truth it is of great importance to awaken the slumbering attention of christians—not as one of any novelty, but as lamentably neglected and unfelt. That while to the church are committed the duty and the means, under the divine blessing, of enlightening the world, it is ordained of God that the saving knowledge of His truth shall go out to the dark places of the earth through no other medium than her ministry and ordinances and embodied holiness ; so that the whole blackness of darkness, now brooding over the nations, must remain there as long as the church remains in selfish inactivity ; and so that it will arise and pass away just in proportion as the church, awaking to a sense of her awful responsibility, and her eminent dignity and privilege, shall arise and put on her beautiful garments and “go forth as a lamp that burneth.”

What the world needs first, is *light*. In the beginning, when the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, the first step towards order, and beauty, and life, was the com-

mand of God, "*let there be light.*" And now that an infinitely more fatal darkness covers the earth, there can be no growth of any thing excellent among the Gentiles that know not God, till "He that commanded the light to shine out of darkness" shall shine into their hearts, "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This, I am well aware, he can do without his church; as in the beginning he enlightened the world before the sun was created. But now that the sun hath been made to rule the day, we have as much reason to expect to see the morning spread upon the mountains without his appearing, as to behold the nations enjoying the guidance of divine truth, without the going forth of the church to preach the gospel to every creature. Thus waits a perishing world upon the faithfulness of the church. Thus the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, till the church shall vouchsafe to employ the endowment with which God has invested her for giving deliverance to the captive. Such, to hundreds of millions of immortal souls, is the tremendous cost of our every selfish and disobedient delay.

We have now seen what constitutes the great office of the church of Christ on earth—that it is no other than a great association, under a divine constitution, of the professed people of God, for the propagation of the gospel to every creature; and that, inasmuch as *the preaching of the gospel*, by an ordained ministry, is God's chief ordinance for that propagation; so the church is a great *Missionary* association, divinely constituted, for the special work of sending into all the world the ministers and missionaries of the word.

But if such be the cardinal object of the whole church, it must be alike the cardinal object and duty of every part of that church; so that whether a section thereof be situated in America or in Europe, or the remotest latitudes of Africa, it is like required to attempt the enlightening of all the earth—and though it be the smallest of the local divisions of the christian household, and though just on its own narrow boundaries there may be millions of neglected Pagans swarming with the horrors of heathenism, still that little section of the church is to embrace within the circle of its zeal, if not of its immediate labours, the destitute of all the earth.

And what is thus the duty of the whole church and of any section thereof, is equally the duty of every individual member thereof. There is no more obligation upon the ministry to shine as light in the world, than upon all the disciples. If the revolving and effulgent planet hath its orbit—so hath the twinkling star its place—and both by the same law must shine. Thus to every christian there is a sphere, and however obscure the station of any, the united contribution of all to the light of the world, like that of the innumerable and almost invisible points of radiance in the milky way, would make a bright path of holiness in the church which the ends of the earth would see and admire.

I see no ground in the scriptures, or in the fundamental principles of the church of Christ, for the distinction so common among us, between the various portions of the great field of missionary labours, as if a part were *domestic*, and therefore peculiarly imperative in its claims, and the rest were foreign, and therefore altogether subordinate in its claims upon

our aid. I cannot perceive the warrant in scripture, or in the principles of christian benevolence for supposing, that because when two of my fellow creatures are perishing for want of the gospel, one happens to live on this side of an invisible, geographical line, and the other on the opposite—or the former under the same form of government with myself, and the latter under another, therefore, one is to be regarded as so peculiarly my neighbour that the other must be kept in a place of secondary interest as a foreigner, and though the foreigner be by far the more accessible, and speak my own language, and have descended from the same ancestry with myself, and the other have come from people of another tongue, and be only of my own nation by having been transplanted from another continent, nevertheless I must pass by the former in my errand of love, though he be now at my way-side, until I have gone hundreds of miles to offer the gospel to the latter.

Within the limits of the government of these states, are people of an immense variety of nations and languages, and habits, and dispositions, as dissimilar among themselves, and from us, in every feature of character, as if they were separated by the breadth of the earth; and can it be, that, merely because acknowledging the same jurisdiction with ourselves, they are so to be preferred in the efforts of our christian zeal, that though I were living on the northern boundary of this land, and just beyond me were a nation of pagans, I must not give them the lamp of life till I have travelled some thousands of miles toward our southern border, to a tribe of precisely similar condition, except in the one particular of being within the limits of this government? It seems to me that a

distinction so perfectly indefinite and arbitrary is altogether beneath the dignity of the church, and inconsistent with the spirit of a disciple of Him who, in allotting the blessings of his Providence, and in sending out the preachers of his Grace, has followed no lines of distinction within the limit of "*every creature.*"

The Bible recognizes no nation as having any peculiar connection, in matters of religious zeal, with any christian, but that of "the true Israel, who, (by profession,) worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh."—Towards all of this peculiar people, whether of the church in Asia, or Africa, or Europe, or America, he is bound to feel an attachment unspeakably more tender and enduring than that arising from any local or political relations. They are "fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God." His first love is due to them. His first effort to do good to men belongs to them. All the rest are, indeed, entitled, by divine command, to the most unwearied efforts of the church, in her every section, to make them partakers of the light of life, but they belong alike to the field of foreign enterprise, because alike aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; and they belong alike to the field of domestic effort, because the church hath her home as little in one part of this world as another.

But still, is there no scriptural warrant to justify the church, in a particular nation, directing her missionary efforts more extensively to the destitute of that nation than to those of a people on the other side of the globe? In certain circumstances there is—and a very definite warrant, the metes and bounds of which are in-

telligible to the feeblest mind, and subject to none of those questions concerning the dividing line between domestic and foreign, under the shadow of which, the merely nominal friend of missions finds so convenient a refuge. I find it in the Epistle to the Galatians, in these words: "*As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*"*

Here I perceive the universal desire and object which the church and every christian should feel and aim at—*good unto all men*, without distinction of language or country. And then, since, however, we may desire the good of all at once, we cannot attempt the sending of the blessings of the gospel to all at once, and in the same proportion, I am furnished with a sufficient direction as to where to begin, and whither to go next, and how much to do here, and how much there. "*As we have opportunity.*" Not as we may be connected by local or civil relations with the destitute, but simply *as we have opportunity*, so that if the church in these United States, have evidently a more favourable opportunity of promoting the gospel within the walls of China than in any unevangelized regions within our own territories, then, by Him who makes the opportunity, is she called to bestow her first and chief attention upon China—and in not doing so at present, but devoting her main energy to the gathering in of them that are wandering as sheep without a shepherd, within the limits of our own country, she is justifiable only because, and only so far as, she has reason to believe, that among them she has a better opportunity of promoting the good of man and the glory of God.

* Gal. vi. 10.

But among the “*all men*” to whom we are to do good, the rule of the Apostle selects one people as having a peculiar claim upon our first, and strongest, and latest efforts. “*Especially unto them that are of the household of faith.*” In other words, to our brethren of the professed children of God; the members of the church of our Redeemer under the whole heaven—making no distinction in our benevolence whether they be countrymen at home, or “strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, or Bythynia.” So far as all are of the household of faith, all are entitled to the special regard enjoined by the apostle; and when we can do good only to some out of all, the rule to govern us in the selection is just the same as among all those that are without the household—simply *as we have opportunity*.

And it is this special duty towards the household of faith, according to opportunity, that accounts for that first offer of the gospel to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and that first and strongest anxiety of the apostles in their ministry every where, to bring in the dispersed of Judah, which has so often, and I believe so erroneously been adduced in support of the idea, that to those who are in the same country, and under the same government, and constituting the same nation, we are bound to give because they are thus connected with us, the distinct preference in the propagation of the gospel.

But in truth, the relations of place or of government, of soil or of vicinity, or of any thing else of a worldly kind, had no share in the special zeal of the apostles, for the conversion of the Jews. For whether they were dwellers in Mesopotamia or Judea, Parthians, Medes or Elamites, Cretes or Arabians,

by birth or citizenship, so that they were only Jews; whatever language they spoke or monarch they served, that zeal was equally special and equally earnest for their conversion. And it was not because they were all descended from Abraham and Sarah; for this honour had the children of Edom as well. But it was because they were of the household of faith—"children of the promise"—"to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose were the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." Hence it was, that in cities of Greece and in Rome, the apostles first went to the children of Israel. This was all the domestic mission they knew, but it was a domestic mission in all foreign lands. And such is the only domestic obligation the christian church in any country has a right to own. Beyond this, it is *opportunity* alone that gives preference; within this, show me a people of the church of God, and whether their dwelling place be under the sun of Africa or amid the snows of Siberia, or here on my own native soil, I am bound by the tie of christian relationship to seek their good with a speciality of attention which no relations of country or of government between me and such as are not of the household of faith can claim.

Here then arises a very important question, which deserves the serious consideration of all the friends of missionary labour—Whether the several decayed branches of the primitive church, which in the eastern hemisphere are dragging along their decrepid existence, and though so corrupted and mutilated, are now of the church of Christ as much as in the

days of their strength and beauty—whether they are receiving, in *comparison with others not of the household*, from their brethren of more favoured sections of the church, *according to opportunity*, that special effort to do them good, and renew their strength, to which their peculiar relation entitles them?

There was a time when the duty of doing good, according to opportunity, and of shining as each christian was enabled of God, was well fulfilled in the church. It was in the day of her “first love.” The love of Christ constrained all ranks and offices in the household to live not unto themselves. Ministers of all degrees were indeed as blazing stars in the right hand of the Lord. The various sections of the church were to the surrounding night as so many golden candlesticks, lit up and kept bright by the Lord, who walked in their midst. It could be said with truth, of christians in general, as St. Paul said to those of Philippi, that “in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation” they shone “*as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.*” Every point was radiant; every limb was active. Every member had not the same office, but the same spirit. While some only preached, all laboured; all loved, all lived by faith, all denied themselves, all continued instant in prayer that the kingdom of God might come. Then consequently it was that “the word of God exceedingly grew and prevailed”—that the heathen were astonished at the rapidity of its spread—that all barriers and persecutions were as insufficient to check it as to prevent the progress of the morning light; that the preachers of the gospel in some ten or fifteen years after the death of Christ,

were characterised by the heathen as *they that had turned the world upside down*. This was not because apostles preached or miracles were wrought, for the gospel treasure was in "earthen vessels" then as since. "The excellency of the power" was all of God. He, by his converting Spirit, in the ordinary way of his holy influences, blessed the word and gave the increase. This he did by his church exclusively. "Her light" had come in the coming of the Messiah. "The glory of the Lord" had risen upon her, when that "day-spring from on high" had visited her. And it was just because she was willing to rejoice in that light, and *arose* in her reflected beauty, and *shone* as the Lord was pleased to pour his light upon her, that her line went out through all the earth and her words to the end of the world, and "the forces of the Gentiles" were brought unto her. It was the collective energy of the whole church, all alive unto God in her several members, that formed the strength of the ministry of each particular labourer, whether he wrought as an ordained preacher or otherwise. And the force of that collective energy did not depend upon the numbers composing the whole church, "for the Lord can save by few as by many," but upon the proportion of faith, and prayer, and diligent obedience to the will of God, that animated the church, whether her numbers were few or many. The five thousand were fed, not according to the provision in hand, but the readiness of the disciples to distribute what there was, and *God gave the increase* till the last had eaten. Thus was exhibited, in a figure, the feeding of the nations, with the bread of life, out of the slender resources, and by the few labourers of the earliest church. There was no proportion between

the means with which the church began, and the wonderful results that ensued. But such as christians had, they were willing to give; and such as they could, they were anxious to do—trusting their Lord, whose command they obeyed, for all that remained. Accordingly, with their little, they went among the millions, and God took care that they had alway enough, and to spare, for any new opportunity of doing good to the souls of men. When labourers were wanted, labourers came forth out of the general missionary spirit of the whole church, prepared, by the devotion of the private christian, for all the special perils and sacrifices of the ordained preacher. When money was wanted, either to sustain the labourers in their journeyings, or private christians, when they forsook, or were spoiled of houses and lands for the kingdom, then, “as many as were possessors of houses or lands, sold them, and distribution was made to every man according as he had need.”

The world only waits for a corresponding spirit to return to the church, to see the hand of the Lord as wonderfully exerted in the conversion of the nations, as ever of old. Modern mountains are levelled as easily as ancient. Our weapons are the same that primitive christians used. The God of our fathers is our God—“the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” Want of labourers is not our difficulty; for there are men enough in the christian household, consecrated, soul and body, to God, and the right spirit would bring them to the field. Want of money is not our difficulty; for a great abundance has already been consecrated to God in the baptism of our professing christians, and nothing but the right spirit

is needed to bring it out to the work, as the church shall have opportunity for its use. “*Create in us a clean heart, oh God, and renew within us a right spirit! Then will we teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.*” Then, though inspiration to preach, and miracles to attest “the truth as it is in Jesus,” be never vouchsafed to the world again, the power that gave them once will still be with the church to make some other means equally mighty. Then, though there should seem no opening in the empire of darkness, the way will appear fast enough for the church to proceed without delay; but not so fast, or so far in the distance, but that, as in the journeyings of Israel, and the primitive propagation of the gospel, she may feel that at every step, she walks by faith, and that all the power, and all the wisdom, and all the conquest, are of God.

“The signs of the times,” at present, in regard to the prospect of a great increase of spirit and effort, for the propagation of the gospel, are decidedly encouraging. There is a renovating hand at work in various sections of the protestant church. The revival of religion in the ministry, and among the members of that venerated parent church, through which we love to remember, that our articles of faith, and our beloved liturgy, and our apostolic order, and our holy scriptures, were derived, and between which and ourselves, I hope the sense of special relationship, and the desire of entire co-operation in all common labours, may continually increase—the revival of religion in the church of our mother-country, during the last forty years, and now proceeding more hopefully than ever—exhibiting its blessings in a mind of special spirituality and scriptural simplicity, and

in a zeal to promote the gospel of remarkable beauty and wisdom, so that her noble universities are deeply feeling the renovating influence, and the whole church may be regarded, notwithstanding her present secular troubles, as more prosperous spiritually, more lovely in holiness, more vigorous in effort, more united in counsel, and more rapidly preparing for every good work, than at any preceding era of her history; *this* (I say) *is one of the signs of the times*, which all the world may see.

There is another of parallel features, in most respects, and of great interest and encouragement, though upon a reduced scale, in our own Episcopal Church. The movements elsewhere are impressive. That, in the kingdom of Satan, evinced in the new mustering of the forces of discord and infidelity, is not the least. There is a movement every where in the heathen world—a movement of blind dissatisfaction with what is possessed, and of undefined expectation of what is to come, which shows a hand at work in the dark. How astonishing the leading of Providence, in regard to the empire of China. From the walls of that great Jericho of paganism, the private signal, though it be but as the scarlet thread, has already been displayed—indicating, that even now there are those there who look for redemption in Israel. That our church has obeyed that call, so far as has been done, in sending the brethren who have recently gone out from us for the work of the Lord in that metropolis of the heathen; and that, in our schools of divinity, there were young men, who, at the call of the church, were ready to say, *here are we, send us*, and that many more wait the voice of the church to mark out their field in the empire of heathenism,

is a very encouraging evidence of the progress of right views of the missionary obligation, and a right spirit for its fulfilment. But still, how much increase of scriptural views, and of a scriptural, primitive spirit, in this respect, has yet to take place in our ministry, among our candidates for orders, and throughout the body of our laity—what increase of the spirit of self-denial, self-consecration, and simple obedience to the claims of Christ; what a growth of solemn, affectionate, and prayerful consideration of the immense demand for men to labour, and means to sustain them in our new and rapidly populating states! What enlargement of zeal for the benighted heathen, and the scattered sheep of the house of Israel; how much more of that love of Christ which constraineth men to live not unto themselves, and to count all things but loss, for the excellency of knowing and diffusing the knowledge of Christ, do we need, before our church may be considered to have fairly arisen, and trimmed her lamp, and gone forth to meet her Lord in his glorious appearing as “a light to lighten the Gentiles!”

But how may the much greater increase of that spirit be promoted among us? A just sense of the vital connexion between a true zeal for the promotion of the gospel in all the world, and the vigour and purity of religion in our churches at home, should alone present this question as of the greatest interest. A few brief hints, by way of answer, will conclude this discourse.

1. Let there be every where a much more diligent teaching and enforcement of the great principles of the obligation resting upon all christians in regard to the propagation of the gospel. I fear the object is

too much to produce present impressions, by superficial representations and temporary excitements, than deliberately and carefully to uncover the root of the matter, and engraft great, permanent principles of self-consecration and effort. I fear that to get money for a present enterprise is suffered too much to interfere with the slower but surer object of securing hearts and minds prepared for all enterprises of zeal and wisdom. There is a great lack of knowledge on this subject. Multitudes imagine that the missionary spirit is something altogether separate from the spirit of the ordinary ministry, and especially of ordinary piety; so that one may have no zeal for the promotion of the gospel, and yet be destitute of no important feature of a consistent christian. They suppose, also, that missionary associations and efforts are so entirely distinct from the church, so incidental and extra to the ordinary duties and objects of her organization, that church duty and missionary duty, church membership and obligation to take part in missionary work, are entirely distinct and independent; so that if one choose to have nothing to do with any effort to propagate the gospel beyond the circle of his own interests, he may still be a very consistent member of the church. Earnest teaching is needed to show our people, and keep them in remembrance, how the spirit and field of the ordinary ministry and of the most devoted missionary are essentially one, so that to support missions in their most unlimited aim, is as much their duty as to support the ministry. And again, how entirely the spirit of the most self-consecrated missionary and of the private christian are essentially one, so that to be self-denied, and to bear the cross, and to count not property or life dear

unto us for Christ's sake, is as binding on one as the other. And again, how entirely the church is a missionary society, in its grand design, in the spirit and object of its divine Founder, in the primitive commission of its ministry, and in the work which the Lord has given its every member to do ; so that the Missionary Institution of the world is the Church of Christ on earth, of which all properly constituted missionary boards are but subordinate committees to facilitate the action of that one great society ; consequently that every member of the church, by the vows of that baptism in which he was consecrated to Christ, and by his every renewal of those vows at the table of the Lord, stands committed and pledged to take part with his heart and mind and prayers and substance, as he hath opportunity, in promoting the gospel to the ends of the earth, and cannot take back this pledge till he takes back his baptismal vows, nor escape this obligation, till he shall escape the duty of being a member of Christ's church, and a follower of God. Let our parochial ministry, standing before their flocks in that spirit of fervent love to God and man which belongs to their office, whether it be exercised on christian or heathen soil, be diligent and faithful to inculcate these simple elements of christian duty ; let them summon their people as professed servants of the missionary cause, by their very christian name and church membership, to the fulfilment of their vows ; let them value the least success in persuading their people, out of love to Christ, to deny themselves and take up the cross, however little their ability to give, as unspeakably more precious and availing, through prayer and faith, to the progress of the gospel, than a hundred fold their gifts

without their love. Let them teach diligently the doings and efforts of the missionary cause, as well as its principles, keeping the mass of the whole field, as it were, always suspended in their view; the waste places of our own land; the fearful destitutions of our great west; the alarming increase of its population over the supply of an educated ministry; the tremendous population of the empire of heathenism; let the minds, and hearts, and consciences of the people be called to these things, not merely as occasional subjects when a collection of money is to be made, but as matters of daily interest and prayer. Let ministers be careful to *exercise* the interest of their people in these things, however feeble it be, and however little their ability to do else than love and pray. And in this let them seek *the poor of the kingdom*. It is gross injustice and cruelty to pass by those who have no money to give, when we would promote this cause, as if money were all it needed—as if it were not the duty and the privilege of those who have neither silver nor gold, to give such as they have; as if it were not the prayer of faith and the labour of love, in which the poor are quite as rich as others, that form the strength of the whole missionary enterprise. A very large part of the expense of the whole work of the Church Missionary Society in England is sustained by the penny subscriptions of the poor; and how much more has been done by their prayers, he only knows who offers them in his golden censer before the mercy-seat of God. If the poor have the gospel preached to them, the poor have a right and are bound to join in having the gospel preached to those more needy in this respect than themselves.

It is a most mistaken policy, when pecuniary means are to be obtained for this cause, to seek them almost exclusively from a comparatively small number of the more efficient; instead of courting the minor contributions of the poor of Christ's flock, and thus multiplying, so much the more, the minds and hearts and prayers,—the labourers, together with God, that would be led to feel a deep interest in the cause, and be continually calling down the blessing of the Lord.

2. For the promotion of a great increase of a missionary spirit in our churches, much depends upon the agency of those to whom the management of the missionary department is committed. I refer especially to the faith and enterprise and boldness with which they should lead on the work, and the tone and attitude in which they should call on the churches to follow. It is the responsible office, and the most honourable and dignified office of a Board of Missions, in the great work of evangelizing the world, not so to take the guage of the zeal of the churches, as to graduate the missionary effort by the present missionary spirit, and thus be the followers, instead of the leaders of the churches; but to set up the banner of the Lord of Hosts on the highest and broadest ground of missionary duty and privilege, and summon the churches to sustain it; it is to excite and call out the missionary spirit, by taking up such positions of bold confidence in God, and zeal for his gospel—by commencing such enterprises of zeal and responsibility as will make the ministry and the people realize that they have all much to do, and that great efforts of love and zeal are required of all. The churches expect this of their agents, in the direction

of this cause. The work of sustaining is their own; that of guiding and projecting, of calling out the strength of the church, and of putting it to constant, vigorous exercise, they have entrusted to their representatives. What our people will be ready to sustain, depends, in a very important degree, upon what their board of missions shall have faith and enterprise to undertake. If the latter call for but little self-denial, and little earnestness of zeal, and little concentration of effort, either among the people or the ministry, the spirit of both will be feeble, and the little demanded will be far worse rendered, than if, in the noble daring of men, putting their trust in God, they had increased their claim an hundred fold.

Let it be always remembered, that for all the purposes of missions, as far as opportunity may ever be opened, the missionary society, by which I mean *the church*, is abundantly possessed both of means and men. At the font of baptism, and the table of the Lord, there hath been a consecration of soul, and body, and substance, to the will of her great Head, on the part of every attendant at either, which can be neither strengthened nor withdrawn. "All things are ready." The gold and the silver are provided. The men who profess to be given to the Lord, are provided. The Lord hath set the open door. The destitute are anxiously waiting. The Holy Spirit, for the needed power and blessing, is promised. All things are ready; except the hearts of those who have vowed the vows of the christian covenant, to pay the Lord that which they have promised. Yet lack we one thing.—A great increase of a sense of the solemn obligation of every member of the church, to live for the propagation of the gospel; so that if the Lord should

say to any, as he said to one of old, *go sell all that thou hast, and give to the needy, and come take up thy cross and follow me*, there would be love and obedience in his heart sufficient for the sacrifice. To promote this, I know how much the Lord expects of his parochial ministry. I know the talent with which he has entrusted them for this end. I know the inefficacy of any organization for missionary business without their co-operation, each in his own sphere, as the agent of the Lord in this cause. But I know, also, how much depends upon the lead given by the constituted direction. I would have them, not only confident in God the Son, as the God of missions—who saith in answer to all fears, “*Certainly I will be with thee*”—not only quick-sighted with the eye of faith, and the soul of love, to discover the open door to any missionary field, and then undaunted in the spirit of aggressive enterprise, to sound the trump of onset, and send their captains to the breach; but for the sake of enlisting the spirit of the churches the more vigorously, I would have them count so much upon that very spirit, as to assume a great responsibility which nothing but a great increase of the same can enable them to sustain; and then I would have them speak to the churches *as men having authority*, affectionately indeed, and kindly, and prudently, but with the tone, and from the position of men representing, not a voluntary institution—not some association arbitrarily connected with the church—but representing, by regular delegation, the whole Episcopal church of this land, and God the Son, who sitteth upon the throne, as its head. I would have them speak, not merely to the will, but also to the consciences of the people; taking the position, that what

the church needs for the work, as far as her members possess it, the church already owns for the work, in the fact that it is in the possession of her members ; and thus, instead of bowing to them in the servile begging of a gratuity, standing by the side of the baptismal font, and the sacramental table, and with one hand upon the cross, and the other pointing to a world in ruins—rebellious and perishing, and yet redeemed by the blood of the Lamb—solemnly, affectionately claiming the men and the means with which to propagate the gospel. The people wait to “hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” on this subject. And the sooner it shall be spoken, not merely by a formal resolution, but by line upon line of plain and full instruction, as the voice of the body of Christ—“*Prepare ye the way of the Lord,*”—the sooner, and the more submissively will the great lesson be every where learned, and will every limb of the whole body become instinct with the spirit of the common Head.

And now is the time for that voice to be heard. The Lord hath stood forth amidst the intestine strivings and agitations, with which we were once distracted, and commanded peace, that our church may speak His will. And now there is peace. Though the storm be every where else, and there seems no prospect but of its raging more and more ; within our bounds there is a great calm. Most remarkably, and most universally, the elements of contention have gone away. The mire and dirt of the once troubled sea have sunk to the depths. Scarcely a ripple remains ; whilst a strong, and deep, and quiet tide is setting directly in the course of truth and righteousness. “It is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in

our eyes." It is the evidence that God is in the midst of us. But it is more. It is opportunity. It is expectation. It is tremendous responsibility. It is like the silence in heaven, when to the seven angels were given the seven trumpets. It is the accepted time—the time prepared for the church to speak to her people, and summon them to their work, and send out her angels with the trumpet of the everlasting gospel. Oh! may God, who hath given us the sweet calm, give us grace to keep it, and use it, not for slumber and self-gratulation, but for fervent thanksgiving and prayer; for united action; for unwearied love; for uncrippled and undaunted enterprise—not saving the energies which, in worse times, would be spent in household strife, to be put by in usefulness—but rejoicing that we can concentrate them so much the more profitably upon the one work of propagating the gospel.

I have no time left to say any thing upon *the necessity of a spirit of prayer* for the sending of labourers, and for the increase of a general missionary spirit, and for all the wisdom and success of the work. And yet it is almost the very work itself. A spirit that shall take off our eyes from the difficulties, and set them immoveably upon God, to open the door and convert men for the field, and prepare hearts to sustain them, is just that, without which our calm will be our death, and with which our weakness shall be strength, the sea our highway, the rock our fountain, the desert as the garden of the Lord, and the *whole world His church*. "*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.*"

Let the sound be heard on earth universally and without ceasing, from the lips and hearts of the peo-

ple of God: "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is heaven"—and soon the seventh angel shall sound, and there shall be heard great voices in heaven, saying: Allelujah! "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever." Amen.

CONSTITUTION

Of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America,

As established in 1820, and amended in 1823, 1829, 1832, and 1835.

ARTICLE I. This Institution shall be denominated "The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America."

ART. II. The Society shall be considered as comprehending all persons who are members of this Church.

ART. III. At every triennial meeting of the General Convention, which is the constituted representative body of the whole Protestant Episcopal Church in these United States, there shall be appointed, by a concurrent vote, on nomination by a joint committee of the two Houses, a Board of thirty members, who, together with the Bishops of this Church, and such persons as became patrons of the Society before the meeting of the General Convention in the year 1829, shall be called the "Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America." The said committee of nomination shall consist of three Bishops, to be elected by ballot in the House of Bishops, and three Presbyters, and three Laymen, to be elected by ballot in the House of Clerical and Lay Deputies.

ART. IV. To the Board of Missions shall be entrusted the supervision of the general missionary operations of the Church, with power to establish missionary stations, appoint missionaries, make appropriations of money, regulate the conducting of missions, fill any vacancies in their numbers which may occur, and also to enact all by-laws which they may deem necessary for their own government, and the government of their committees.

ART. V. The presiding Bishop of the Church shall be the President of the Board, and in his absence the senior Bishop present shall preside ; in the absence of all the Bishops, the Board shall elect a President *pro tempore*.

ART. VI. The Board of Missions shall hold its first meeting at the call of the presiding Bishop, and meet annually thereafter at such time and place as may have been appointed at the previous annual meeting, and also on the second day of the meeting of the General Convention, at the place of its meeting. They shall publish an annual report of their proceedings for the information of the Society, and present a triennial report to each stated General Convention.

At all meetings of the Board, ten members shall form a quorum. Special meetings of the Board may be called as shall be provided in their own by-laws.

ART. VII. The Board, as soon as may be after it has been constituted, shall

proceed to appoint eight persons, four of whom shall be Clergymen, and four of whom shall be Laymen, who, together with the Bishop of the Diocese in which the committee shall be located, shall be a Committee for Domestic Missions; and eight other persons, four of whom shall be Clergymen, and four of whom shall be Laymen, who, together with the Bishop of the Diocese in which the Committee shall be located, shall be a Committee for Foreign Missions; all of whom shall be *ex-officio* members of the Board of Missions. The Board of Missions shall determine the location of the committees respectively. Any Bishop or Bishops present at the place of meeting shall have a right, *ex-officio*, to attend, as members of the same, the meetings of the committees. Vacancies occurring in either of the committees during the recess of the Board, may be filled by the committees respectively, subject to the approval of the Board at its next meeting.

ART. VIII. To the Committees of the Board thus constituted shall be referred, in their respective departments, during the recess of the Board, the whole administration of the general missionary work of the Church, subject to the regulations of the Board. Each committee shall make a report of its proceedings to the Board of Missions at every meeting of the Board.

ART. IX. The Board of Missions shall appoint, for each committee, a Secretary and General Agent, with a suitable salary, who shall be the executive officer of the committee, to collect information, to conduct its correspondence, to devise and recommend plans of operation, and, in general, to execute all the purposes of the Board, in his proper sphere, submitting all his measures, before their adoption, to the committee for whom he is appointed for their approval. Each Committee shall also appoint a Treasurer. And the Board shall designate which of the Treasurers so appointed shall be authorized to receive all moneys not specifically appropriated, which moneys shall be at the disposal of the Board. The Secretaries and Treasurers shall be *ex-officio* members of their respective Committees, and of the Board. Local and subordinate agents and officers may, when necessary, be appointed by each Committee.

ART. X. For the guidance of the Committees, it is declared that the missionary field is always to be regarded as one, THE WORLD; the terms, Domestic and Foreign, being understood as terms of locality, adopted for convenience. *Domestic Missions* are those which are established *within*, and *Foreign Missions* are those which are established *without* the territory of the United States.

ART. XI. No clergyman shall be appointed a missionary by the Board, or by either of the Committees, without the recommendation of the ecclesiastical authority of the diocese to which he belongs; nor shall any missionary be sent to officiate in any diocese, without the consent of the ecclesiastical authority of the same; and no clergyman shall be appointed a missionary who is not at the time a minister of the Protestant Episcopal Church of regular standing; and the appointment of a missionary may be annulled at any time by the written direction or order of a majority of the Bishops of the Church.

ART. XII. The Board of Missions provided for in the third article of this Constitution shall, in all cases, be continued in office until a new Board is elected.

ART. XIII. It is recommended to every member of this Society to pray to Almighty God for his blessing upon its designs, under the full conviction that unless He direct us in all our doings with his most gracious favour, and further us with his continual help, we cannot reasonably hope to procure suitable persons to act as missionaries, or expect that their endeavours will be successful.